

FIRST DRAFT

**MOORE COUNTY
WORK FIRST PLAN
FY 2007-2009**

**Submitted for approval by Moore County Social Services
and
The Moore County Welfare Reform Planning Committee**

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Moore County Domestic Violence Plan

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I. CONDITIONS WITHIN THE COUNTY

A. Current Realities and Vision Statement

1. **Current Realities** - Moore County will continue to assist all cash assistance families in achieving self-sufficiency, responsibility and enhancing the quality of life. Our agency plans to strengthen families, emphasize prevention and early intervention in the lives of our clients. This will be achieved through working collaboratively with the following agencies: Sandhills Community College, Employment Security Commission, **Program Resource Institute**, local churches/faith community, the school system, Cooperative Extension, local employers, Moore County Health Department, Child Support Enforcement, Sandhills Coalition for Human Care, Friend to Friend (Battered Women's Shelter), **United Way/Salvation Army**, Vocational Rehabilitation, **Wheels to Work** (for vehicles) and Child Care subsidy. We realize that this will not solve all the problems for low-income families and that there will still be a substantial need for transportation, affordable child care and substance abuse prevention and treatment.

Transportation and child care, which have been significant barriers to client independence, **have improved only slightly in the last few years.** **The Work First Program has a 15 passenger van that we use for transporting clients to their place of employment, job sites and to their chosen daycare facility. We have recently started working in a collaborative manner with Sandhills Coalition for Human Care for client transportation needs. Referrals are made on an as needed basis to the Coalition.** We are also utilizing another resource, the Rural Operating Assistance Program, which is a grant to help employed individuals who have gone off the welfare system. This program assists in paying mileage while the client is getting settled in their new job.

2. **Vision Statement** - Moore County will maximize all possible resources to achieve and promote self-sufficiency thus eliminating generational poverty and enhancing the quality of life in our county.

This vision statement is consistent with the guiding principles of the Work First program:

- Employment is the foundation of society.
- All families have a responsibility for themselves and for their children.
- Work First is family driven, family-focused, and family friendly.
- All families are different.
- Work First Family Assistance is viewed as short term.
- Sanctions support and enhance the philosophy of work and personal responsibility.

- Important safety nets are child support, child care, Medicaid, food stamps, and community resources.

B. Economic Conditions

Located in the south central section of the state, Moore County enjoys a fairly healthy economy due to its strong tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and health-care industries. The unemployment rate is at 4.6% currently. Unfortunately, the county overall experiences a low-wage service driven economy. Moreover, the wealth is not shared equally through the county. This disparity in wealth distribution throughout the county is readily identifiable when comparing median income by municipality and by employment sector. The majority of jobs are usually low-wage, part-time and service oriented. The statistics indicate that there are two distinct economic areas in Moore County. Each area displays its own characteristics. The less densely populated communities in the northern end of

Municipality	Population	Median Income
Aberdeen	4,060	\$31,911.00
Cameron	288	\$21,875.00
Carthage	2,169	\$35,050.00
Foxfire Village	501	\$54,750.00
Pinebluff	1,178	\$40,536.00
Pinehurst	10,694	\$58,950.00
Robbins	1,246	\$28,828.00
Southern Pines	11,573	\$38,822.00
Taylortown	919	\$30,781.00
Vass	775	\$27,188.00
Whispering Pines	2,277	\$60,035.00
Other	39,089	

the county, which has (until recently due to job closings) dominated in farming, manufacturing and owner-operated pottery shops are noticeably less affluent. This stands in contrast to the more populous southern end, where approximately 88% of the county's population lives. This area is established as a retirement community/resort area.

C. Population:

According to statistics approximately 22% of the population of Moore County is over the age of 65, most of which are retirees. Most of the retirees in the county have relocated to the county after retirement. They are well educated and typically have a better financial standing than the retired native residents.

Population By Age Group				
Population	2000 Census	2005 Estimate	2010 Projected	2015 Projected
0-9	8,780	8,998	9,601	9,970
10-19	9,298	9,452	10,396	10,426
20-34	12,054	13,068	13,446	15,375
35-44	10,597	10,566	10,563	10,396
45-54	9,355	11,082	11,899	12,336
55-64	8,407	10,196	11,644	13,190
65+	16,278	17,135	19,252	21,255
Total	74,769	80,497	86,801	92,948

- D. Employers in the County:** Moore County has approximately 1,800 employers. The top ten largest employers in the county are:

Company Name	Number of Employees
FirstHealth of the Carolinas	2,850
Moore County Schools	1,800
Pinehurst Resort & Country Club	1,300
County of Moore	635
Wal-Mart	450
Gullistan Carpets	375
St. Joseph of the Pines	320
Pinehurst Medical Clinic	300
Pinehurst Surgical	292
Sandhills Community College	283

II. PLANNING PROCESS

A. Planning Committee

In 1998, the Moore County Board of Commissioners appointed a local committee, which included representatives from local government, public and private organizations, as well as volunteers. This committee was charged to examine the conditions in Moore County and develop a local plan to address the needs of our Work First program recipients. The committee has evolved and met periodically since then to fulfill its mission. Moore County's Work First staff provided an overview of the program, the caseload decline (since implementing our plan to reform our welfare system), as well as caseload characteristics that are unique to Moore County. It was noted that out of Moore County's current Work First cases,

124 of the total 160 cases are categorized as “child-only” cases. Of the “adult” caseload, only 13 individuals are deemed “able-bodied”. Even with this limited number of suitable participants, Moore County has consistently ranked in the top 12 counties meeting the mandatory client participation rates.

The staff recommended that the committee support continued operations of a Work First program under a “Standard” plan.

The following members comprise the planning body for Work First Planning committee in Moore County.

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B. Public Comment

The committee made the 2007-2009 plan available for public review from September 1, 2006 through September 15, 2006. Copies of the plan were made available to the public at all Moore County public libraries (Vass, Carthage, Southern Pines, Aberdeen, Pinebluff, Pinehurst and Robbins). The plan was also available for review at the Moore County Department of Social Services as well as on Moore County’s website. Comments regarding the plan were received prior to September 20, 2006.

C. Planning Process

In accordance with North Carolina General Statute 108A-27.6, the Moore County Board of Commissioners appointed a local committee, which included representatives from local government, public and private organizations, as well as volunteers to assess Moore County communities and identify the needs of the county. The Work First Welfare Reform Planning Committee met on August 29, 2006 and the committee recommended the plan be taken to the Board of Commissioners for approval at their October 2, 2006 meeting.

III. OUTCOMES AND GOALS FOR THE COUNTY

A. Statewide Work First Goals

1. Employment. The Work First Employment Services and the Cash Assistance staff will be working with the client engaging in a team approach from the moment the client arrives in the Social Service agency. Together, the employees complete the assessment on the client’s situation (including identifying any job skills). In keeping with the overall philosophy of Work First, the staff members attempt to secure immediate employment for the applicant. If unsuccessful, attempts are made to schedule an interview with a potential employer at (or before) the time of

application for Cash Assistance. Self-sufficiency and personal responsibility will be strongly emphasized from the start. Our county will be monitored monthly on the number of clients entering the workforce. In order to impress upon the client that they must play a strong role in determining his/her own destiny, each applicant will be expected to sign a Personal Responsibility Contract. The Cash Assistance and the Employment Services staff obtain philosophical “buy-in” into our reform efforts by stressing the importance of this contract to the clients. Social Services staff will continue to monitor the keying of the Employment & Training Codes, which plays an important part in capturing data for all clients going to work. All Benefit Diversion and Retention data will be manually tracked in order to evaluate the success of families, independent of ongoing public assistance. In Moore County the Work First Program surpassed all state goals. The state’s Benefit Diversion goal for Moore County was 88 cases. Moore County completed 114 Benefit Diversion cases. The state goal for staying off welfare after going to work was 90%. Moore County’s outcome for this goal was 93%.

2. Meeting Federal Participation Rates. The active participation in employment service activities will lead to full-time employment. Currently 50% of Moore County’s able-bodied Work First clients should be participating in countable activities each month. These actively participating clients should average 35 hours or more per week to meet this goal. For clients who are not ready for the job market or who may lack in job skills, the JOB READINESS class is offered by Sandhills Community College. Work experience sites are utilized when available. Clients may go to these work sites and build a résumé while enhancing their job skills. Moore County Department of Social Services (DSS) works collaboratively with the Employment Security Commission office by making referrals so clients can find jobs while registering for “First Stop”. DSS will occasionally refer clients directly to employers, while ensuring child daycare and transportation services are in place to support employment for the parent.

DSS intends to have 100% of our two-parent households participating 35 hours or more each week. In Moore County, the Work First Program currently has no two-parent households. DSS recorded service to only two two-parent households last year. Two-parent participation is low mainly due to the resources we have available such as Retention Services, Emergency Assistance and Benefit Diversion. The above resources are used to help families immediately, thereby preventing the need for long term public assistance. These cases are routinely monitored each month.

3. Providing Employment Services. Moore County currently has only 8.13% of the total caseload who are able bodied adults to meet our participation rates. Employment services and other supportive services such as

transportation, child care, participation expenses, job coaching and Job Readiness skills, personal and family counseling, and access to mental health services are offered to all of our adult caseload members. When clients are not able to work, they are supported in other ways. Many adults attend the JOB READINESS class to obtain job skills and even a General Equivalency Diploma (GED). Sometimes successful full-time employment is not achieved right away for these impaired adults. DSS staff members also assist the client in navigating through a service support system such as Vocational Rehabilitation, Mental Health, Supplemental Security Income benefits, and/or Child Support payments.

4. Benefit Diversion. In Moore County we believe the most successful outcome for the client is to have his/her needs quickly identified and met on a very time-limited basis to avoid the need for ongoing Cash Assistance. It is our belief that this approach is in keeping with the original intent of “Temporary Assistance for Needy Families.” Plans are to continue using Benefit Diversion, when appropriate, to alleviate the client’s crisis, which should eliminate the need for ongoing assistance. Both the Cash Assistance and Employment Services staff will jointly assess the client’s situation. If, and when appropriate, the client will be offered Benefit Diversion. In most cases, DSS has determined it is best to provide the client the maximum amount of Benefit Diversion to significantly improve the client’s situation and ensure it is a true diversion from ongoing public assistance. The main benefit of offering this type of service is that the client should experience relief from their financial crisis, yet it does not activate their TANF “time clock” (which could result in an overall reduction in benefits available to that client because of the shortened time-frames).
5. Staying off Welfare. Moore County’s job retention rate for Work First participants is 93%. Our success in this area has been a direct result of utilizing all available resources such as Retention Services, Benefit Diversion, Emergency Assistance and Mileage Assistance to ensure the client does not quit his/her job and return to the welfare program. Follow-up services will continue to be offered to the clients who begin employment. We have discovered the most critical time for preventing “employment dropout” is during the first six months of employment. Offering a myriad of support services to clients has proven beneficial to the client and to our county Work First program. Flexibility and availability is key to assisting our clients as they experience problems on the job or in the home situation. Sustained encouragement is extremely important in helping clients build self-confidence in the workplace. DSS recognized the need for a holistic approach to serving an underprivileged family. This type of support has prevented clients from quitting work or from being dismissed from their job. Moore County is actively

participating in the State's Multiple Response System¹. This program is part of the holistic approach to serving families in need. Clients who are no longer eligible for the Work First program due to increased income receive 12 months of extended Medicaid. The clients usually remain eligible for Food Stamps and child care assistance even with their increased income. DSS continues to track clients for approximately 12 months after leaving the Work First Program.

6. Job Retention.

In December 2001, counties were notified of the implementation of this goal. Families who leave Work First for work are counseled and continually encouraged to remain employed. The Work First Employment Services staff mediates between the client and the employer to resolve any conflict that may arise. Working clients who leave Work First due to employment are afforded continued health insurance coverage through the Extended Medicaid program. Clients may continue to receive Medicaid for up to 12 months. Historically, each Fall Moore County receives grant money from the North Carolina Department of Transportation. The funds are used to pay the client's mileage to and from work for a period of time. Retention Services funding has been used to pay child care, necessary car repairs, employer-required uniforms, and an occasional mortgage payment on a very short term basis to prevent the client from returning to the Work First Cash Assistance Program. Because of the excellent rapport that has been developed with our Work First participants, they are quick to report any barriers they encounter. This affords DSS the ability to perform early intervention techniques to minimize the crisis so the client can overcome the presenting obstacle. A DSS employee regularly follows up to track the employment progress of all clients who have left the Work First program. The contact is well received and has been a source of positive reinforcement for our former Work First clients.

B. County Developed Outcome Goals

Weekly detailed case reviews are conducted to monitor all progress. Barriers to any client progress in the Work First program are identified and action plans are developed to remove any difficulties in the client meeting his/her goals.

IV. PLANS TO ACHIEVE THE OUTCOMES AND GOALS

(See section III, Above)

A. Activities (See section III, Above)

B. Supportive Services (See section III, Above)

¹ MRS is North Carolina's new approach to child protective services. This system allows for more than one response to initial reports of child maltreatment. It allows child protective services workers to assist some families without a formal determination of abuse or neglect.

V. ADMINISTRATION

A. Authority

Moore County's Work First Program will be administered by the local DSS in accordance with state and federal law. (See XVII Certification).

B. Organization

1. Intake

Eligibility for Cash Assistance is determined by the Work First Unit team members. When a client presents at the DSS office, to "apply for a check," he/she is immediately informed of programmatic changes. The receptionist notifies him/her that he/she will be seen by two specialists (a Cash Assistance employee and an Employment Services employee.) Both employees assess the client's needs and circumstances. Then the decision is made regarding the best service option. Both employees participate in explaining the rules, regulations, expectations and the Mutual Responsibility Contract. Services are offered to the client based upon need and individual circumstances. Services offered include (but are not limited to) employment activities, child care, transportation, referrals to substance abuse and domestic violence counseling and treatment, housing assistance, food stamp benefits, etc.

2. Emergency Assistance

Emergency assistance is provided by the Work First Unit. All unit members have been cross-trained to take and disposition applications in this program. Moore County will provide assistance for temporary shelter, rent/eviction, mortgage /foreclosure and utilities. An emergency situation is one that may potentially place a child at risk of being deprived of basic necessities or at risk of out of home placement.

3. Employability Assessment

Once a need for ongoing public assistance has been determined, the employability assessment is then completed during the same intake process. This step is completed by the Employment Services worker while the cash assistance worker is performing the data matches on the computer.

4. Employment Services

Moore County has a staff member who specializes in employment services. In addition to this person, all other Work First case workers are cross-trained in this area and are utilized as necessary. This approach is vital to our seamless system of service delivery.

5. Other Supportive Services - Work First participants who receive substance abuse services will also receive case management services.

These services will assist the client in obtaining housing, healthcare and other community services. In addition, the substance abuse services provided will be gender specific. Issues such as domestic violence, relationships, parenting and life management will be covered during treatment. These are key issues to development of “self sufficiency” skills for Work First participants.

6. **Eligibility Determination** - Eligibility for cash assistance is determined by the Work First Unit. When a client requests monthly Cash Assistance, the receptionist immediately begins updating the client on how the Aid To Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) has changed to Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF). The client is introduced to the team members (which consists of a Cash Assistance Worker and an Employment Services Worker). Both employees assess the client’s needs and circumstances. The team determines if the client’s needs can best be met through Benefit Diversion, Retention Services, or Emergency Assistance. If the need cannot be met through these services, then the client is assisted with application for public assistance. Both staff members thoroughly explain the rules, regulations, expectations and the Mutual Responsibility Contract. Services are offered to the client based upon need and individual circumstances. Services offered include (but are not limited to) employment activities, child care, transportation, referrals to CSE, substance abuse and domestic violence counseling and treatment, housing assistance, food stamp benefits, etc.
- C. **First Stop** - All mandatory participants are referred to the local Employment Security Commission Office. Referrals will be made in accordance to Work First Manual Section 104 C. For example, each Work First participant is referred to the local Employment Security Commission office after the Work First application is made at Social Services. Moore County does not contract with the local Employment Security Commission.
- D. **Child Care** – This resource is imperative to the Work First client who finds a job immediately and desires to start his/her job right away. In the Child Day Care Program the order of priority for serving child care needs are: **(1) Protective Services, (2) Employment which includes Employment of Foster Parents, Participation in Work First Employment Services, Employment, full-time (32 + hours per week), then part-time (less than 32 hours of work per week) (3) Education/Training which includes teen parents and other parents. (4) Developmental Needs and (5) Child Welfare Services.**
- E. **Transportation** - In the past few years, transportation has been one of our biggest obstacles in assisting clients on their journey to independence from public welfare. However, in the past year, the transportation situation in Moore County has improved for the Work First participants. Due to the caseload decline, fewer participants need transportation. One van is used to transport our clients to job

activities or to Job Readiness classes. Participation expenses and retention benefits are used to serve individuals at or below 200% of the poverty level. For example, repairs were done on client-owned vehicles so that transportation would not become a barrier to continued employment. For clients that are no longer on the Work First program, Department of Transportation Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) grant money has been utilized. This money has been used to help clients who have become employed and their new income made them ineligible to receive regular Work First assistance. These clients are the ones who are still employed and receiving Extended Medicaid. As an incentive to help keep them working, mileage is paid to and from work only. The DSS Board voted to reduce the maximum mileage check from \$250.00 per month to a capped maximum of \$125.00. Occasionally, DSS financially covers car repairs and car insurance for participating clients. All these transportation benefits have greatly assisted in keeping the client employed, therefore eliminating the need to return as an active cash recipient in the Work First Program. The Work First Unit in Moore County has been working closely with Joe Currie, Susan Bellew and the Interfaith Hospitality Network to assist clients in obtaining donated cars for Work First clients who are employed (Wheels to Work). Since the beginning of 2002, **23** Work First clients have obtained vehicles through the Wheels to Work Program.

- F. Substance Abuse Services** - Work First participants will continue to be screened for substance abuse disorders during the intake/application and review process. The Work First staff members will be using the AUDIT and DAST, which are state forms to conduct these screenings. Participants who are identified as needing further assessment will be referred to the Substance Abuse Counselor at the local Mental Health office. Case management services will also be provided to participants receiving treatment services. Clients who are referred for further assessment will be seen within two (2) working days for their appointment. Transportation and child care services will be provided to clients receiving substance abuse service in order to attend treatment and follow-up appointments. As a result of this assessment, Work First participants who are determined to need treatment services will be referred to the appropriate level of care in order to address those needs. There will be a range of treatment options available, from outpatient to residential. There will be an emphasis on outpatient treatment services to Work First participants so they are able to continue involvement in employment activities.
- G. Family Violence Option** - Moore County has procedures in place for staff to follow when dealing with victims of family violence. (See Attached Appendices). The Cash Assistance and Employment Services staff notifies all Work First applicants and recipients of the Family Violence Option. The staff will complete the initial screening. All clients who report or who exhibit indicators of Domestic Violence are immediately referred to our local battered women's shelter, Friend to Friend. The shelter provides information to distribute among all of our clients with details on Domestic/Family Violence and how to get help. Once a client has an assessment done at the local shelter, the shelter staff will report information to

DSS regarding the client's ability to participate in any activities. Both the shelter and the DSS staff members will make referrals and make arrangements for child care, counseling, housing and transportation. DSS plans to administer any domestic violence state grant money in order to pay for the above services as well as needs the client may have in the transition from the Domestic Violence shelter to their own housing. The Eligibility Criteria are as follows:

- Families who are receiving a Work First cash payment, or
- Families who meet the qualifications outlined in Section 102 of the Work First Manual for receiving Work First Services (i.e., gross income at or below 200% of poverty, etc.). This category does not include non-custodial parents since the state law authorizes only employment related services to this coverage group, or
- Families who meet the qualifications outlined in the state "Dear County Department of Social Services Director" letter dated March 3, 2000, with the subject heading "Use of Maintenance-of-Effort (MOE) Funds for Child Welfare Services".
- In addition to the income limits outlined for families in the above named categories, non-citizens must be "qualified aliens" as described in Section 111 of the Work First Manual, and have a least one child who is under age 18 who meets the kinship requirements outlined in Section 109 of the Work First manual. We refer our clients to our local women's shelter for assessments, counseling, etc. We pay for these services as the Domestic Violence grant money allows. We also refer clients who are victims of Domestic Violence to the Sandhills Community Action Program for housing for victims of domestic violence to ensure the family a place to live. We can also use retention services for clients whose income is at or below 200 % of poverty to appropriately cover any other financial needs the client may have to support continued employment and to promote self-sufficiency.

There are some services that will be provided which will not meet the federal definition of "assistance" and will not be cash-like services. These services are defined as:

- Nonrecurring, short term benefits designed to deal with a specific episode of need;
- Not intended to meet recurring or ongoing needs; and
- Not extending beyond four months.

H. Maintenance of Effort (MOE)

Moore County plans to fund all employment activities and supportive services using our Maintenance of Effort Funds. See Attached Appendices for a detailed budget that supports the written plan.

I. Child Welfare Services - Child Well-Being. Moore County's Work First goal is to ensure that all children of Work First families are protected and safe. Staff members in the Work First and Child Protection Service units work together to

monitor all children who are involved in both programs. Workers from each unit are teaming up to implement the Multiple Response System which is working out very well in our county. The workers staff shared cases and both workers, along with the client, are involved when developing safety plans and their Mutual Responsibility Agreements. This family centered practice was designed to encourage the family to have more ownership in the entire family's progress and growth. In each shared case, a service plan is in place and is consistently being followed. The Child Protective Service Social Worker will use the Eligibility Information System to monitor each child they work with to determine if there is an active Work First case. The Work First staff offers any appropriate services available to ensure the safety and well being of the child and family. All Work First and Child Protection Service cases involving the same families have a service plan in place, which focuses on the safety of the child. The Child Protection and Work First Units will continue to work in a collaborative manner to ensure the well being of the child known to both programs. The child protection worker will continue to utilize the Eligibility Information System to identify the children they receive referrals on that may also receive public assistance. The Work First worker will offer any available services to the family to support a safe and healthy environment for the child. In our budget for 2007-2009 we are requesting to allocate \$964,343 for child welfare services.

VI. Emergency Assistance - Moore County will continue to provide emergency assistance to families based on the following eligibility guidelines:

- The family must have a child who lives with a relative as defined for Work First cash assistance and who meets the age limit for Work First.
- The family's total gross income must be at or below 200% of the federal poverty limit.
- Family members must meet the same citizenship requirements used for Work First.
- Benefits provided will only be short term. Short term benefits are described as: non-recurring, short term benefits designed to deal with a specific episode of need and not intended to meet recurring or ongoing needs; and not extending beyond four months.
- Moore County determines eligibility based on income and the emergency need. Income is determined using the current Work First guidelines. An emergency situation is one that may potentially place a child at risk of being deprived of basic necessities or at risk of out of home placement. Moore County provides assistance for temporary shelter, rent/eviction, mortgage/foreclosure and utilities. The Emergency assistance payment limit will be up to but shall not exceed \$300.00 per year.

VII. Services to Low Income Families (Under 200% of Poverty) - The Work First Unit in Moore County will continue to provide services to families with children when the family income is at or below 200% of poverty and in accordance with the policy outlined in the Work First Manual. We provide services that are not considered "assistance" under the federal definition, which is also outlined in the Work First manual, and will continue to

provide these services. Specific services include but are not limited to: Housing, (which includes rent and utilities), education, Job Readiness, transportation, work related expenses, case management, on the job training, parenting skills, child and family enrichment and child care. The services provided must be:

- Nonrecurring, short term benefits designed to deal with a specific episode of need;
- Not intended to meet recurring or ongoing needs; and
- Not extending beyond four months.

We have experienced great success in the past using this service to aid clients in crisis situations. Our 100% retention rate (Staying off Welfare After Going to Work) in Moore County is due mostly in part to this service. The assistance limit will be up to but shall not exceed \$750.00 per year.

VIII. Services to Non-Custodial Parents - The Work First Unit in Moore County will continue to provide employment-related services to non-custodial parents of Work First Children when the non-custodial parent's family income is at or below 200% of poverty and in accordance with the policy outlined in the Work First Manual.

The Work First Unit in Moore County works in a collaborative effort with the Child Support Office and Sandhills Community College to provide Job Readiness and job skill classes (Pathways) to the non-custodial parent in certain Work First cases. During and after the Pathways class, the instructors help find jobs and give job referrals to the non-custodial parents. The Work First Unit and the Child Support Enforcement Agency communicate regularly to staff and review cases. The case review may include discussions related to the non-custodial parent resulting in a follow up referral to the Child Support office. The Pathways class has been very successful for our Work First clients. We hope more non-custodial parents will take advantage of this service offered to them.

IX. Exemption from the Work Requirement

Our policy is to reduce from a 12-month exemption (for a single parent with a child under the age of one) to a 3-month exemption. This will allow the client time to bond with their newborn child but also move quickly back into the work force. This policy would be similar to the Family Medical Leave Act governing most employees' maternity/adoption leaves of absence. This policy will be contingent upon the availability of day care funds here in Moore County. If a client who has the "S" code exemption decides to give up his/her exemption code to go to work, we will give the exemption code back if he/she becomes unemployed and still has the "S" code exemption left for the remainder of the three month period.

X. Innovative County Strategies - The Work First units are currently co-located in the same building. This is a great improvement from a few years ago when the two units were housed 13 miles apart in two separate towns. The message about the positive changes in the Work First program begins at the front door when the DSS receptionist greets the client. Information is located in the workers offices regarding ways to obtain a job and personal responsibility is strongly promoted. Employers in the community (as

well as workers inside the DSS agency) contact the Work First unit often concerning current jobs openings. The Cash Assistance and Employment Services staff team up to conduct a joint assessment of the client's reasons for visiting DSS, primarily focusing on the client's current work and home situation. This is completed prior to beginning any portion of an application. A resource room is designated for the client's use. This room is available for all Work First clients and houses a computer, printer, color copier, and information on the computer showing job openings and opportunities in our area. The clients may use our computer, printer and copier to search for jobs as well as to complete résumés and employment applications. When necessary, the employment staff actively assists in completing the job résumés and applications.

Thanks to Sandhills Community College, and their dedication to the Work First clients of Moore County we plan to continue the Job Readiness class. This class has been a vital part to building an employment foundation for all of our Work First clients. Our county also offers incentive bonuses for demonstrating skills necessary to move toward independence. For example, any student with a perfect attendance record and who passes all courses is eligible to receive a one time \$50.00 gift certificate. In the Job Readiness class, the clients learn how to develop job skills such as cashiers training, food preparation skills and computer training. Many clients have obtained their General Equivalency Diplomas through the Job Readiness class. The program is always custom designed to meet the specific needs for the participants being served. As mentioned above, Moore County is working with the disabled participants to obtain a physician's certification to attend the Job Readiness class at Sandhills Community College. This allows the client to enhance self-confidence, job skills and obtain a possible job reference/referral for future use.

Our network of community resources has proven to be successful here in our county over the past few years. Caring collaboration and case staffings have enabled the client to receive the best service benefits and referrals possible. We have been successful in obtaining Vocational Rehabilitation services, Mental Health services and counseling from the school systems for our clients. **Many clients**, over the past couple of years, have obtained SSI benefits with the guidance and encouragement of our Work First staff. One of these clients was able to attend our Job Readiness class at Sandhills Community College, while awaiting their disability income. The client that attended the class at Sandhills benefited most from the budgeting and time management classes. One thing we have done with all our disabled clients is to obtain new medical forms. On the medical form we inquire if the client is able to attend the classes at Sandhills, even if they are unable to work. Our network of referral agencies includes but is not limited to representatives from Vocational Rehabilitation, Sandhills Community College, **Program Resource Institute**, the School System, Child Support, Coalition for Human Care, Partners for Families and Children, the faith community, the **Cooperative Extension office**, the Daycare Unit, Employment Security Commission and Friend to Friend (our local women's shelter).

- XI. Special Issues** – In the past couple of years we have had several new business openings such as Bone Fish Grill, Chili's, Best Buy, Bed Bath and Beyond, Ross, Kirkland's,

PetSmart, Panera Bread, Fred's and Moe's Grill. Also, Home Depot may be possibly opening a store in our area in the near future. Many new job opportunities are available to our clients; however, most of these new businesses are and continue to be in the southern end of our county. Transportation is a continuing concern due to the fact our county has no affordable means of public transportation.

- XII. Eligibility Criteria** (N/A Standard County)
- XIII. Community Service Programs** (N/A Standard County)
- XIV. Appeals Process** (N/A Standard County)
- XV. Review Prior to Expiration of Time Limits** (N/A Standard County)
- XVI. Funding Requirements** – (N/A Standard County)

XVII. Certification - This County Block Grant Plan has been reviewed, opened for public comment, adjustments made accordingly and _____ by a _____ vote of the Moore County Board of Commissioners on September 20, 2006. As Chairman of the Moore County Board of Commissioners, I hereby certify that the Moore County Work First Program will be administered by the Department of Social Services in compliance with state and federal law.

_____, Chairman, Moore County
Board of Commissioners

MOORE COUNTY DSS FAMILY/DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PLAN

The purpose of this plan is to establish the procedures social services staff will follow in dealing with victims of family violence. It will be a common agreement on how to proceed and interact in the best interests of families who are experiencing or who have experienced family violence in the past. The concepts and central assumptions of this process are:

1. Family violence is a serious problem with lasting consequences for victims, their children and the community as a whole.
2. Family violence is a common problem that is the responsibility of the whole community to acknowledge and to correct.
3. No two family violence cases are alike. The causes are many, complex and involve complex family dynamics.
4. Family violence can hinder families who are attempting to move toward self-sufficiency.
5. Until violence in the family is dealt with the family unit may not be able to function properly.
6. A long-term solution ensuring the safety of the victim and the children is the primary goal.
7. Counseling for all household members is important and should be provided.
8. It is essential to the success of this protocol that open and on-going communication and cooperation exist among the agencies involved in the delivery of family violence services.
9. It is understood that this is a dynamic and flexible document, and that it will be reviewed periodically and revised to reflect changing laws, policies, and community issues.

Procedures:

1. Notification/Screening/Assessment
 - a. Moore County Department of Social Services understands all clients served may be experiencing or may have in the past experienced family violence. Work First Cash Assistance and Work First Employment Workers will notify participants of the Family Violence Option.
 - b. All workers must refer clients who either self-disclose or for whom there are indicators of family violence for screening or further assessment. The following procedure is to be used:
 1. Family violence victims are referred to Moore County's local shelter, Friend to Friend.
 2. Friend to Friend will administer the screening assessment for family violence.

- c. Friend to Friend will report to the Work First worker the apparent ability of the Work First participant to participate in any activities and all needs of the client such as counseling, transportation, childcare, etc.
- 2. There is a procedure in place for instances where couples are being served together. The above procedures should be followed except for the following items.
 - a. Moore County Department of Social Services will not to send couples to be screened/assessed together.
 - b. Moore County Department of Social Services will be made to find some other activity for one spouse/partner while the other spouse/partner is being screened/assessed.
 - c. Moore County Department of Social Services as well as Friend to Friend.
 - d. If necessary, Moore County Department of Social Services and Friend to Friend agree to schedule each partner for a follow-up appointment without his/her partner.
- 3. Moore County Department of Social Services and Friend to Friend agree to:
 - a. Never release the address or telephone number of a victim to anyone.
 - b. Creative planning will be necessary when scheduling a victim who is still residing with the batterer. Both parties agree to never tell the batterer that the victim is going through DV activities.
 - c. Take care before sanctioning a victim for noncompliance. It may be that the batterer is preventing her from participating.
 - d. Moore County Department of Social Services agrees to work closely with the DV professional. They can provide guidance about safe activities for the victim.

If the Work First participant requests a waiver for any of the Work First requirements, our Work First workers will consult with Moore County Friend to Friend assessor, concerning the requested waived items.

Beth W. Duncan, DSS Director

Jackie Thamm, DV Director

Nelda Caudill, Income Maintenance Administrator

Renee Steel, Work First Supervisor